



Reprinted with permission from the New Britton  
and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United  
States and Adjacent Canada, Vol. 1, page 310,  
Copyright 1952, The New York Botanical Garden.

## ***CAREX GRAVIDA* VAR *GRAVIDA*** **PREGNANT SEDGE**

Pregnant Sedge is a grass-like perennial that forms clumps of stems which reach up to 60 cm high and arise from short root stocks. Leaves are 4-8 mm wide and clustered near the base of the plant. Flowers are clustered in egg shaped spikes that are ca. 1 cm long; the perigynia occupy most of the spike, but there are a few male flowers at the tip. Spikes are aggregated at the top of the stem and subtended by 2-3 leaf-like bracts that are shorter than the inflorescence. Scales subtending each perigynia are oval, awned, and as long or longer than the perigynia. Perigynia are 4-5 mm long and egg-shaped; they gradually taper into a beak that is serrate on the edges and notched at the tip. There are few or no nerves visible on the outer face of the perigynia. Each perigynium has 2 stigmas, and a lens shaped achene. Fruit mature in July.

*CAREX GRAVIDA* resembles *C. HOODII*, from which it differs in having a loose sheath that easily breaks ventrally, that is also prominently septate-nodulose or mottled on the dorsal surface. The awn-tipped scales of the perigynia are also distinctive. A hand lens or microscope and technical key are needed for positive identification.